

EXHIBIT C

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS**

STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS,)
INC.,)

Plaintiff,)

v.)

Case No. 1:20-cv-763

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN;)
JAMES B. MILLIKEN, Chancellor of the)
University of Texas System in his)
Official Capacity; STEVEN LESLIE,)
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic)
Affairs of the University of Texas System)
in his Official Capacity; DANIEL H.)
SHARPHORN, Vice Chancellor and)
General Counsel of the University of Texas)
System in his Official Capacity;)
JAY HARTZELL, Interim President of the)
University of Texas at Austin in his)
Official Capacity; BOARD OF REGENTS)
OF THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY)
SYSTEM; DAVID J. BECK, CHRISTINA)
MELTON CRAIN, KEVIN P. ELTIFE, R.)
STEVEN HICKS, JODIE LEE JILES,)
JANIECE LONGORIA, NOLAN PEREZ,)
KELCY L. WARREN, AND JAMES C.)
“RAD” WEAVER, as Members of the Board)
of Regents in Their Official Capacities;)
DANIEL JAFFE, Interim Executive Vice)
President and Provost; RACHELLE)
HERNANDEZ, Senior Vice Provost for)
Enrollment Management and Student)
Success; and MIGUEL WASIELEWSKI,)
Executive Director for Office of Admissions,)

Defendants.)

**Declaration of
Morgan Bennett**

I, Morgan Bennett pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declare the following:

1. The facts set forth in this declaration are based on my personal first-hand knowledge, and if called as a witness, I could and would competently testify to the following matters under oath.
2. I identify as a Black, bisexual and queer, non-binary individual.
3. I am currently a rising senior at the University of Texas at Austin (“UT”). I am majoring in Radio Television and Film.
4. My racial identity impacted many of my experiences, especially in high school in Columbus, Texas. Though the school was racially mixed – about 50% white and 50% students of color – I was often the only Black student in my honors classes and only one of three students of color. One of my English teachers told the whole class, “as you’ll notice, Black kids don’t value education.” This statement caught me off guard and I didn’t know how to respond. Being one of the few students of color in class held me back in that there was no one else to back me up if I did speak up. When I began applying to colleges, one of my teachers tried to encourage me and told me I would be able to get into a good school because I was Black. These types of comments frustrated me because they reduced me solely to my race. Race-conscious admissions does not do this. It considers race as one of many factors. Racism underlies these types of stigmatizing comments, not race-consciousness. It is important to have more Black students on college campuses so they can reverse these types of assumptions by showing classmates and faculty that they are admitted based on impressive credentials, not just race.
5. My high school did not offer that many Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors classes, even though I was in that track. There were no efforts offered by the school to prepare us for college.

6. I began taking honors or AP courses my sophomore year out of my own initiative. No teacher or counselor encouraged me to take the more advanced classes. I also felt isolated in my honors classes as the only Black student. My white classmates sometimes seemed surprised that I did well in school. My friends who were Black or Latinx were not encouraged to take advanced coursework.
7. In addition to proactively pursuing the most rigorous coursework made available to me, I participated in several extracurricular activities. These activities included working at the county newspaper and competing in statewide academic competitions through the University Interscholastic League. I also participated in editorial and feature writing during my junior year, and persuasive writing from my sophomore through senior years. During my junior year, I participated in the Future Farmers of America where I learned about plant anatomy and its uses. Finally, throughout all four years, as a member of the school's yearbook staff, I developed skills in photography, graphic design, advertising, management and collaborative leadership.
8. I thrived in both academics and extracurriculars in high school and although I received an SAT score of approximately 1300, I do not think a score is fully indicative of a student's full potential to succeed in college. I did not take a SAT prep course because I did not know that it was a widespread practice among wealthy families, nor was I encouraged to do so by the college guidance counselor.
9. UT was one of my top college choices because of the affordable in-state tuition, the availability of the degree program I was interested in, and its commitment to pursuing racial diversity made me feel comfortable.
10. I was ranked 12 out of 113 students in my graduating high school class. This put me in the top 11% of my class. When I applied, I knew that UT had a holistic admissions policy that

considered race as one factor among many others. UT's race-conscious policy made me feel more confident when I applied because I knew I could tell my full story. It was important to me because race has affected virtually all of my experiences throughout my family life and in the wider-world. It is an important part of myself that I wanted to present to the school and it is important for schools to know that it is something that will also affect your college experience.

11. In my essays, I wrote about my family dynamic where I am mixed-race and raised in a white household by my white mother, my white sister, and her white father. Having a Black father and a white mother has definitely shaped my identity. Growing up in a white household as a Black individual made my own race stand out more because I was in direct contrast to the people living in my home where I experienced micro-aggressions from my own family members. It also made me more capable of bridging cultural divides, seeing multiple perspectives, and unpacking every layer of complex situations where race is often one dynamic among many others. This has increased my ability to identify multiple paths towards resolving complicated issues and challenges.
12. I was accepted to UT through the holistic admissions policy. When I got into UT, I did not think that my SAT score was the main reason, but rather, my overall portfolio of work during high school.
13. During my time at UT, I have been in classes where both students and faculty are predominately white. The low representation of students of color has been particularly stark and frequent in courses offered by the Moody College of Communication, including courses in radio, television and film which are required for my major. The limited diversity of students and faculty of color has shown me that UT has more work to do in order to create a more inclusive campus.

14. I have had many interactions with white students who make awkward efforts to not be offensive. A white male student in my French class was afraid to say Niger which I presume is for fear of saying the “n-word.” Other white students will approach me to share their stories of anti-black racism with me. This makes me feel uncomfortable in that I am the only Black person they are familiar with and they want to show some form of solidarity. I know these types of cross-racial interactions are important in that they help to develop cultural competency among white people. But they are also exhausting and place a large amount of pressure on students of color at UT. It is important that UT has enough Black students on campus so that this work can be more spread out, and thus less exhausting. Having a sufficient number of same-race peers also allows me to find safe spaces to process these experiences, recover, and find energy to re-engage in student activities and classes every day.
15. I have been able to meet other students of color of different racial backgrounds from my own. My high school did not have any students of Asian or African descent. I have been able to meet Asian and African students at UT which has helped me expand my worldview and be exposed to cultures different from my own. Before college, I had never met anyone who was an African immigrant, for example, and efforts to include students of color on campus have made this possible, which has had the effect of helping me become more considerate of other people’s experiences.
16. I feel more comfortable in classes that have a higher number of students of color because experience has taught me that I will be less likely to hear something that is offensive in these classes. I can also speak up in class without feeling the burden of speaking on behalf of my whole race. Without having Black professors or professors of color, I would never have considered graduate school.

17. I would like more opportunities to talk about race across a broad population. If there were more students of color on campus at UT, those discussions would be more dispersed and white students would not have to reach out to their “token” friend.
18. UT’s history of failing to combat discriminatory incidents on campus and punishing students of color reacting to racist events is a major contributing factor to reoccurring incidents of racism. For example, I know of a few classmates who submitted complaints about racist incidents to the Campus Climate Response Team, but did not receive a response, or no action was taken to address the incidents. A greater number of students from diverse racial backgrounds would make addressing racism seem less like focusing on the needs of “special interest groups” and more like nurturing the health of a diverse and pluralistic learning community through mutual respect.
19. Decreasing the racial diversity at UT would make the current students of color feel more uncomfortable on campus because of the lack of community and mutual support, which could affect our academic performance and leadership development. White students would not be able to learn as much if there were fewer students of color to engage with them both inside and outside of the classroom and broaden their perspectives on the cultural and sub-cultural experiences of others.
20. Having friends of my racial background and from backgrounds different from my own helps to build a community with a safety net to support me when I experience traumatic and/or racist events. Decreasing the number of students of color would mean the community would not be able to provide the same level of support and students of color would flounder during traumatic events. For all the above reasons, I support UT’s ability to consider race as part of its holistic admissions process to support greater levels of diversity across the student body, and within each racial group.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in Travis County in the State of Texas on December 8, 2020.

/s/ Morgan Bennett

Morgan Bennett